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On Being Human and Other Afflictions

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**On Being Human
and
Other Afflictions**

Roger Weaver

October, 2010

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A Note from the Author

Writing has been a way for me to process emotions. I wrote the poems in this collection in the early 90's which was a trans-formative period in my life. Current friends are surprised at the dark nature of this collection because they do not reflect the person I am now. One must travel through the darkness to recognize the light. I hope readers can find some meaning in them.

I hope you enjoy the poetry. I ask you to take notice of the Creative Commons license. This license allows you to download my poetry and share it with others as long as you give me attribution as the author. You cannot change my poetry in any way nor can you use it for commercial purposes without my permission.

From a Gay Man

I am your son, your daughter,
Your aunt, your uncle,
Your brother, your sister,
Your cousin, your neighbor.
I am your employee, your doctor,
Your lawyer, your teacher,
Your Friend.

I walk with you, talk with you,
Cry with you, laugh with you,
Worship with you, mourn with you.
I defend you, play with you,
Dine with you, camp with you,
Travel with you, share with you,
Love you.

Yet I am slave to your prejudice.
My shackles are your ignorance,
My task master, your misguided faith.
I toil under your whip of terror and reprisal.
My back scarred by your hate and fear.
I cry out in pain, but you ignore me.
I am afraid.

Why do you do this?
I have done nothing to you.
If you fear me, learn to know me.
If I offend you, then learn to know yourself.
If your faith rejects me, then reexamine it.
Have the courage to learn,
Not fear.

I only want to be with you.
To dream as you dream, to hope as you hope,
To strive and achieve, to live as you live.
To smile with you, to joke with you,
To play with your children, to run with you,
To work with you, to die with you,
To care for you.

Allow me this dignity and yours will be returned.
I can give to you myself and together we can touch the future.
We can do so much, if only you will allow it.

You and I are together on the earth but a short time.
Souls together, struggling to live and fearing to die.
Each of us both wanting and lacking.
Each of us human.

© Roger Weaver

January 28, 1993

Nothing to Worry About

They beat a man today.

Pointing and chiding, laughing and cursing,
They took him from his life and threw him to the ground.
They called him fagot, called him queer,
Drew his blood, gave him pain.

They beat a man today.

Feeling high, feeling proud,
They cheered each blow, relished each kick.
Slapped each others' back in hardy congratulations.
A goal achieved, a point well made,
A task accomplished, confidence restored.

They beat a man today.

Don't worry, no need for concerns.
He's not black, not Jewish, not even a woman.
He's no loving mother's son, no loyal friend, no caring brother.
Just a low life queer, a raging faggot, not a man at all.
No need for remorse, no great loss, nothing to worry about at all.

They beat a man today.

© Roger Weaver
February 3, 1993

To those who suffer from violent persecution

Parting

The door stands stout and imposing,
Shield from possibilities and uncertainties,
Protection from hateful remarks,
Guardian from irrational fear,
Barrier to spiteful ignorance,
Deflector of misguided faith.

Within, bliss.
Serenity in your loving embrace.
Your presence perpetual comfort,
Your body enticing,
Your conversation enlightening.
Happiness, endowed by your laughter.

Without, turmoil.
Possibilities for hate,
Uncertainties in contact,
Laughter with double meaning.
Violence and danger portend.
Each action examined for effect.

My hand reaches for the knob,
Metallic coolness an omen.
I turn the knob, the shield breaks,
Doubt and anxiety ensue.
Without becomes reality,
A day begins.

© Roger Weaver
March 10, 1993

To George for your birthday

To Rachel

While driving from work today, I saw two butterflies
Dancing a waltz of life across a clouding sky.
Turning and bobbing in intricate circling patterns, they danced.
Their yellow fluttering wings reflecting a broken and graying light
As they struggled to hold form and course
Against the gusts and eddies of an uncaring wind.

As I watched this tiny ballet of life playing before me
My thoughts turned to you.
What to say to you my new found friend
As the wind threatens and the sky clouds.
Comfort and encouragement I can offer, advice and insight I can give.
But perhaps all I need say is simply, Butterfly dance on.

© Roger Weaver
June 18, 1993

To Rachel on learning she was diagnosed with a degenerative illness

Depression

I am an autumn leaf, adrift on the breath of a discontented god.
No control. No rest. No ending. No hope.

© Roger Weaver
Summer, 1993

Joy

I am the song of a running brook in early spring.
New life. New color. New beginnings.

© Roger Weaver
Summer, 1993

Devils in the Dark

In the darkness of the daylight
In the mansions of the poor
They gather in their singleness
To preach and to abhor

From their mouths come subtle hatred
Designed to divide you and confuse
Their deeds are acts of shameful
True honor they refuse

They claim themselves for Christendom
While their thoughts burn cold as fire
The old wisdom they have twisted
It is not to holiness they aspire

Their shadow faith they wish to spread
Great wealth and power their goal
What will they not accomplish and collect
When at last they command your soul

When looking for your devils
Don't cast your glances at me
Look to those you follow
And tell me what you see

© Roger Weaver
Summer, 1993

To Christian Fundamentalists

A Prayer

O God,
Hear your suffering children cry.
Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!

O God,
Hear your persecuted children plea.
Justice! Justice! Justice!

O God,
Hear your faithful children pray.
Forgive them! Forgive them! Forgive them!

© Roger Weaver
November 1, 1993

Gay Thanksgiving

We are gathered here this evening
Around this table of plenty.
Each of us bound together
With bonds of our own choosing.

Bonds of trust and companionship,
Bonds of respect and acceptance,
Bonds of laughter and care,
Bonds of love.

In their tightness is wanted security.
Each knot, comfort.
Each twist a memory.
Each turn, a kind act.

This is true friendship,
Our bonds are proof.
What better thing should we celebrate?
On this Thanksgiving Day.

© Roger Weaver
November 1, 1993

To friends who dine with us on Thanksgiving

The Garden

I am this patchwork garden,
Planted with unending kindness and love,
Watered with tears of unneeded sorrow.
Growing in me are remembrances of too many shortened lives.

Walk my paths with reverence and awe,
I grow on sacred and hallowed ground,
Bought with innocent life,
Blessed by caring hands and unselfish deeds.

In me weeds of hate will not grow,
To thorny prejudice I give no resting place,
Clinging apathy I reject,
Greed I will allow to wither and die.

I am a growing mirror to the soul,
Here ridicule has no place,
All are welcome,
From me no one will be cast out.

Gaze upon me and know that my beauty
Comes at too great a price.
I honor the memory of the dead,
I feed the mouths of the suffering.

I would wish not to exist at all,
Yet I am here, and here I will stay,
Firmly rooted in ground once hardened by hate,
Now softening with my presence.

I am this patchwork garden,
Planted with unending kindness and love.
Water me with your tears,
And remember.

© Roger Weaver
January 14, 1994

For the Living Quilt Garden on the Knoxville Worlds Fair site to honor and feed victims
of HIV/AIDS.

This poem was read by the author at the dedication of the garden in the Spring of 1994.

Light a Candle for Me

Shhhhhh, be calm, be still,

Listen to the silence.

Can you hear them? The uncounted thousands.

They are calling in still quiet whispers,

Remember me, light a candle for me.

Listen to the absent voices.

Hear the unwritten songs.

See the life dances not danced,

Look at paintings unfinished,

Touch sculptures unimagined,

Feel missed caresses.

Sniff woolen sweaters long unworn,

Taste kisses not so long forgotten.

Shhhhhh, be calm, be still,

Listen to the silence.

Can you hear them? The uncounted thousands.

They are calling in still quiet whispers,

Remember me, light a candle for me.

© Roger Weaver

Early May, 1994

Commissioned by the Knoxville Aids Vigil Committee and Read by the author at the
Vigil on World AIDS Day, December 1, 1995